

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST

GS-486-05/07/09

INTRODUCTION

The incumbent of this position serves as a Wildlife Biologist within a State Wildlife Services (WS) Program for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The incumbent performs assignments involving program management, administration and minimal supervision. The work is primarily concerned with damage control operations relating to cessation, alleviation or mitigation of problems caused by carnivores, rodents and birds in urban and/or rural environments. The major issue addressed by the WS Program concerns livestock damage, crop damage, aviation hazards and public health problems caused by various animal species. Both operational and extension techniques are utilized.

MAJOR DUTIES

The incumbent gathers, compiles and evaluates data on damage or hazards caused by various wildlife species. Conducts animal damage control activities where there is a demonstrated need consistent with the planned use of any given area to prevent or reduce economic loss to property, agriculture or to protect human health and safety. Damage control techniques and/or methods used include toxic agents, aversive agents, auditory devices, and mechanical or environmental controls.

Modifies or adapts established damage control techniques as necessary to meet local conditions and address specific environmental, economic or political considerations.

Establishes and maintains cooperative relationships with other agencies, organizations, institutions, industry groups and individuals in meeting program needs and goals. Represents the WS Program at meetings, conferences and workshops with these groups. May negotiate or participate in the negotiation of cooperative agreements/funds with program cooperators.

Communicates safe and effective damage control techniques through extension and other channels to the general public. Information is disseminated by radio and television news releases, bulletins and speeches.

The incumbent develops and maintains (with the assistance of the District Supervisor, State Director and Program Specialists) all documents required by the NEPA.

Recommends, through supervisor, areas for potential research or developmental study. May assist the WS research effort by participating in field tests of proposed damage control materials, devices or methods.

Prepares required scientific and administrative program reports.

May be asked to provide technical supervision and/or guidance to lower graded employees.

FACTORS

KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Professional knowledge of the theories, principles, practices and techniques of wildlife biology and a working familiarity with related disciplines as they pertain to damage control programs and wildlife management.

Knowledge of animal damage control techniques and methods including aerial hunting, toxicants, aversive agents, auditory devices, mechanical devices and environmental controls to develop appropriate and effective control strategies.

Understanding and a good working knowledge of the NEPA requirements and the required documentation associated with the Act.

Knowledge of current literature and research related to animal damage control.

Knowledge of agency policies, procedures and statutory requirements related to the WS Program.

Knowledge of toxic material application procedures. The incumbent will be required to successfully complete appropriate Certified Applicators Examination within three months after appointment to the position. Testing and certification are required by Federal and State laws.

Ability to communicate orally and in writing to coordinate and promote program activities with interested and/or affected groups and organizations and to prepare educational and publicity materials and required program reports.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The incumbent's supervisor may be a State Director, Assistant State Director or a District Supervisor. The scope of the assignment, immediate objectives and priorities are specified by the supervisor. The incumbent is expected to plan and carry out the assignment independently in accordance with proven wildlife management/animal damage control techniques and practices and previous experience. On assignments that involve controversial matters, the incumbent typically will discuss the issues and possible approaches with the supervisor before carrying out the assignment.

Completed work is reviewed periodically for adequacy, technical soundness and accomplishment of program objectives. Potentially controversial actions or recommendations are reviewed for impact on local agency programs and policies.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines include Federal and State laws, regulations and rules. Also included are agency and program policies, directives, procedures and professional literature of wildlife management/animal damage control and related sciences.

Most assignments have aspects which require the incumbent to select, adapt or interpret existing methods, practices and instructions or to generalize from several guidelines to resolve the more complex problems. Some assignments require frequent departures from standardized procedures. The incumbent determines when problems required additional guidance.

COMPLEXITY

The work involves identifying and evaluating damage caused by a wide variety of wildlife species in various damage situations. The employee must analyze each situation encountered and select and apply, or recommend for application, the most appropriate control strategy. The employee must be able to identify and recommend needed areas of program improvement. The demands from interested groups or individuals are often conflicting and occasionally result in high level inquiries. Considerable insight, judgment and communication skills are required to achieve higher levels of understanding regarding reasonable or feasible control strategies.

SCOPE AND EFFECT

The purpose of the work is to investigate and analyze a variety of conventional animal damage control situations and to recommend and/or implement solutions to deal with them. The effective performance of this position contributes to an effective and efficient State predator control and wildlife management program that reduces economic losses from damage to livestock and crops, and alleviates public health and safety hazards.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Personal contacts are with County, State and Federal agency personnel, private landowners, landowner groups, personnel from other WS offices and/or programs and the general public. Some contacts may not be receptive to the duties the incumbent is attempting to perform or the mission of the WS program itself and may tend to be uncooperative.

PURPOSE OF CONTACTS

Contacts are primarily to advise, negotiate, and coordinate predator control activities, and to report, instruct and administer all program functions. Persuasion is frequently necessary in dealing with contacts resolving conflicting objectives. A high degree of interpersonal communication skill is required in training and supervising a workforce of both cooperative and Federal employees.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The work sometimes requires moderately strenuous physical exertion. Horseback riding may be required for some inspections and incumbent must be able to lift moderate weights. Other physical exertion includes walking over wet, rough, uneven or rocky surfaces, bending, crouching, stooping, stretching or similar activities. The work does require average agility and dexterity.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in both office and field locations. There is regular and recurring exposure to moderate risk and discomfort, such as adverse weather conditions, noisy environments and work with the aerial hunting crew. The incumbent is expected to conduct all duties in a safe and orderly manner so as not to injure self or fellow workers. Operation of Government-owned or leased, as well as State-owned, vehicles may be required.